

**Carly Delsigne
on behalf of
the Montana Library Association**

Education and Local Government Interim Committee

Public Testimony

Education and Local Government

September 15, 2014

September 15, 2014

Chairman Facey and Members of the Committee:

Exhibit 13

For the record, my name is Carly Delsigne which is spelled D-E-L-S-I-G-N-E. I am Director of the Clancy Library.

The Clancy Library serves five census designated places in North Jefferson County with a population of over 5,000. In the last fiscal year the library has had an average attendance of 36 members each hour and circulates an average of 30 items each hour. Our attendance has increased by 7.5% in the last year. Over recent years, each tax cycle our mill levy generates less money than the one before. We've had to stretch each one of those dollars in every way we can. We participate in every resource sharing and cooperative purchasing consortium in the state. We use volunteers to courier materials, to tackle building projects, and for everyday operations.

In January of 2013, I had the privilege of speaking in support of HB 203. I said that our library would use an increase in State Aid to replace our public access computers which at that time ranged between 5 and 8 years old, operated on Windows XP, and each served an average of 137 library members each month.

Well, within weeks of receiving the check—we had replaced all three computers. The new computers are faster, more powerful. They allow our patrons to better access information, employment opportunities, learning forums, improve their technology skills, and are so much more compatible with the devices and software that our members use. Over the last year, our computer use has increased by 18%.

I asked some of our members what the new computers meant to them. Here are their responses:

"I've learned to follow my kids on Facebook. They live so far away, but they don't feel so far away because I get to see them and hear what they are up to. Now with Skype I get to talk to my grandkids. They change so much, and we don't get to see them often. This way we get to know them, and they get to know us. We don't miss out on as much."

"I use the computers to do my homework. There isn't even cell service where I live so when I need help from the online tutors or I need to do research for a project—I always come to the library."

"Cornell University calls us citizen-scientists. We track bird and wildlife populations where we live and all of our information is reviewed and added to a worldwide data base. They are discovering patterns and doing important research based on our work. It is exciting to keep my hand in the science, to connect with all these amazing people who are interested in the same things, and to be a part of the really important work being done all over the world."

"I use the computers to search for work. It has been 35 years since I've had to look for a job so it is all new and a lot to learn. I'm trying to bring my computer skills up to date. I search for and apply for jobs. I mapquest routes to interviews. I've finally gotten the hang of email, thumb drives, and attaching documents. The library staff has been really helpful and encouraging. I don't have a computer at home so this is really critical for me."

"I use the computer to fill out FAFSAs for the kids, to do my taxes, to check my email, to get burn permits, and to order stuff I can't find in town. Thank you for providing it."

"Library staff and I have finally figured out how to make my tablet work. I borrow and download audios and ebooks from the library to the computer and then put them on the tablet. We have set it up so I can Facetime with my kids while I'm in the Bakken. My wife and kids come down to use the library's wifi for that. It is really nice to have people to make all the technology work the way it is supposed to."

"We keep track of the kids' activities. Now they expect us to do everything online. We apply for soccer, t-ball, and that's how we communicate for scouts and 4-H. I find music for church. It is a lot—I don't know what I did before Google!!"

•I got a lot more feedback—but I think these comments help you understand why public access computers at the library are so vital to Montana's small communities. We would not have these computers without the State Aid to libraries approved in the last legislative session. Thank you for your service to our state and for the opportunity to speak with you today."

With Chairman Facey's permission, I'd like to submit a copy of my testimony.

